inSPIRE STEM USA

April 23, 2013

The Honorable Christopher Coons
127A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Coons,

As you know, America faces an immediate and long-term employment crisis due to a chronic shortage of qualified workers in STEM fields. Despite high unemployment, the number of available science, technology, engineering, computer science and mathematics jobs far outpaces our ability to fill them.

For example, according to a widely quoted Bureau of Labor Statistics report, only 40,000 U.S. bachelor degrees are awarded in the computer science field annually, despite the fact that around 120,000 new computer science jobs are created in the United States every year.

This systemic failure endangers the competitiveness of U.S. firms in a rapidly changing global economy, especially as many other nations successfully educate their own citizens in critical STEM areas. It also has longer term implications on the health and vitality of our educational system, as it will become increasingly difficult for our primary and secondary schools to develop curriculums that can interest and educate American students in cutting edge science and technology fields.

With this in mind, inSPIRE STEM USA was established to support a linkage between the temporary need for foreign high skilled workers and a longer term desire to promote STEM education in America. inSPIRE STEM USA, a coalition which is co-chaired by former Senator John E. Sununu and Maria Cardona, aims to address this problem by advocating for an approach that can immediately sharpen America's economic competitiveness through modernization of the H-1B visa process while providing long-term support to improve training of tomorrow's workforce.

inSPIRE STEM USA includes organizations, companies and leaders, who are committed to ensuring the United States remains competitive globally by training and graduating more engineers, mathematicians and computer scientists. Our membership is comprised of companies that rely on high tech workers, representatives of educational interests that are concerned with the erosion of effective STEM education in this nation, and a variety of groups supporting progressive immigration policies. We have attached a list of our coalition's membership.

inSPIRE STEM would like to thank the U.S. Senate for initiating a critical debate that could address immediate needs for high tech employers while developing a long term commitment to upgrading STEM and computer science educational opportunities in the United States.

In particular, we commend you and the other members who have advocated for the inclusion of a STEM and computer science education component in this bill. And while we applaud the bill in its current

form, inSPIRE STEM USA recommends a more robust STEM fund like the one you and Senators Hatch, Rubio and Klobuchar included in the Immigration Innovation Act (I-Squared), which has 26 bipartisan Senate cosponsors. We hope you will strongly advocate for the inclusion of such a fund in any immigration reform package that is considered moving forward.

Finally, inSPIRE STEM USA hopes that that any STEM fund be administered to provide the most "bang for its buck," to guarantee educational opportunities in STEM and computer science discipline areas, and ultimately to provide the largest long-term supply of STEM educated U.S. workers.

Again, we would like to thank you and your colleagues in the Senate for all the hard work you have put into crafting this important legislation, and we look forward to providing assistance as you continue your important work.

Kindest regards,

Beneva Schulte
Executive Director inSPIRE STEM USA

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